

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6623

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SEDU, OEXC, LI

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF CUTTINGTON COLLEGE

1. THE CUTTINGTON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES CLOSED DOWN CUTTINGTON UNIVERSITY ON OCTOBER 7 FOLLOWING A STUDENT STRIKE. STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY WENT ON STRIKE ON SEPTEMBER 30 IN PROTEST AGAINST THE FREQUENT POWER AND WATER SHORTAGES THAT HAVE PLAGUED THE CAMPUS. STUDENTS WERE TOLD ON SEPTEMBER 30 THAT NO FOOD WOULD BE SERVED AT THE DINING HALL UNTIL WATER AND POWER WERE RESTORED AT THE UNIVERSITY. IT HAD BEEN OUT FOR SEVERAL DAYS. IN RESPONSE, THE STUDENTS HAVE DEMANDED THAT A SEPARATE ELECTRIC GENERATOR BE INSTALLED ON THE CAMPUS. THEY HAVE ALSO CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION OF THE UNPOPULAR PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY, DR. EMMANUEL JOHNSON AND THE DEAN FOR INSTRUCTION DR. STEPHEN YEKESON WHO IS CURRENTLY ACTING PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY. FACULTY MEMBERS AT THE SCHOOL ARE SAID TO BE GENERALLY IN SYMPATHY WITH THE STRIKING STUDENTS.

2. SEVERAL LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN HAVE CLAIMED THAT AN ADMINISTRATOR WAS ASSAULTED ON THE CAMPUS AND THAT STUDENTS HAVE VANDALIZED UNIVERSITY PROPERTY. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT LAW AND ORDER WILL BE MAINTAINED AND THAT THOSE WHO COMMIT CRIMINAL ACTS WOULD BE PUNISHED. RELIABLE EMBASSY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOURCES HAVE, HOWEVER, SUGGESTED THAT THE STRIKE HAS BEEN NON-VIOLENT AND THAT NO VANDALISM HAS OCCURRED AS OF P.M. OCT 6.

3. THE VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT OF LIBERIA, BISHOP BENNIE D. WARNER, WHO IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE CUTTINGTON BOARD OF TRUSTEES, MET WITH STUDENTS ON OCTOBER 3. ACCORDING TO STUDENTS IN ATTENDANCE, THE VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT PLEDGED HIS SUPPORT FOR

THE STUDENTS' GRIEVANCES SO LONG AS THEY REMAINED NON-VILLENENT.
TO EXTENDED APPLAUSE, HE IS ALSO SAID TO HAVE PUBLICLY DONATED
TEN DOLLARS TO THE STUDENT STRIKE FUND.

3. SOME FACULTY MEMBERS BELIEVE THAT THE UNIVERSITY WILL REMAIN
CLOSED UNTIL MARCH 1978 WHEN A NEW SEMESTER IS SCHEDULED TO
BEGIN. A DECISION IS PENDING THE RETURN FROM THE UNITED STATES
OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND THE EPISCOPAL BISHOP GEORGE BROWN.
THE SCHOOL, LOCATED AT SUAKOKO, BONG COUNTY, IS RUN BY THE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND SUPPORTED BY THE LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT.

5. EIGHT AMERICAN EXCHANGE STUDENTS AT CUTTINGTON FROM
KALAMAZOO COLLEGE ARE EXPECTED TO LEAVE THE CAMPUS AND TRAVEL
TO MONROVIA TO AWAIT A DECISION ON WHEN THE SCHOOL WILL REOPEN.

6. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE REPORTS THAT SOME STUDENTS ARE
ATTEMPTING TO DIRECT THE STRIKE TOWARD POLITICAL AIMS, THE CON-
SENSUS IS THAT THE STUDENTS ARE STRIKING OVER LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCES.
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